

MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP

Success Stories from the Field

Rives Manufacturing Inc

Michigan Manufacturing Technology Center

Lean Implementation Brings New Opportunities for Rives Manufacturing Inc.

Client Profile:

Rives Manufacturing Inc., (RMI), founded in 1992, supplies parts to automotive, lawn and garden, furniture, medical and agricultural manufacturers. RMI's primary processes include CNC wireforming, hot upsetting, cold heading, heavy coining, and wire straightening and cutting. The company employs 43 people at its facility in Rives Junction, Michigan.

Situation:

RMI management wanted to position the company to grow and expand. As a member of the Jackson Area Manufacturers Association (JAMA), RMI first became familiar with the Michigan Manufacturing Technology Center (MMTC), a NIST MEP network affiliate, through joint events held at JAMA. Scott Price of RMI contacted Norma LaVallee of MMTC to request information on MMTC's Lean program and funding options. Together with the support of the Michigan Department of Labor & Economic Growth and the Michigan Economic Development Corporation, MMTC provided RMI with companywide Lean training and on-site implementation assistance through the "From Surviving to Thriving Program."

Solution:

MMTC provided training in Lean terminology and principles for all RMI employees. This helped orient everyone in the company, and provided a strong foundation for implementation. RMI used Value Stream Mapping to identify improvements that could be made in their current processes. A cellular Kaizen helped create a work cell which successfully eliminated work-in-process, addressed customer concerns, reduced lead time, and eliminated off-line sorting costs. Pride and ownership of the team members has resulted in the success of this work. Process Mapping was used to streamline the tooling flow to and from the tool crib, which resulted in a reduction of machine down time associated with this process.

Management continues to play a key role in the Lean implementation process. Lean champions and the management team have weekly meetings so that everyone is updated and in agreement on progress and future projects. Employees receive a monthly newsletter highlighting success and improvements, keeping everyone involved in RMI's progress and helping everyone take ownership and pride in the improvements. A suggestion program has been put in place and in the last 10 months, 36 suggestions have been successfully implemented including 12 to reduce additional waste from processes.

Results:

- * Realized \$20,000 in cost savings.
- * Reduced lead time by 66 percent.

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- * Reduced travel time from 1,095 feet to 650 feet.
- * Reduced machine down time by 90 percent.
- * Increased customer satisfaction.

Testimonial:

"MMTC's training was very realistic. Unlike other seminars, the training took very little effort to apply to real life issues on the job."

Becki Job, Quality Engineer